

THE
COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. VI.

BOSTON, APRIL 1, 1844.

No. 7.

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION.

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In regard to the grand principles on which our own school system is organized, we look for no substantial improvement. Our schools are perfectly free. A child would be as much astonished at being asked to pay any sum, however small, for attending our Common Schools, as he would be if payment were demanded of him for walking in the public streets, for breathing the common air, or enjoying the warmth of the unappropriable sun. Massachusetts has the honor of establishing the first system of Free Schools in the world; and she projected a plan so elastic and expansive, in regard to the course of studies and the thoroughness of instruction, that it may be enlarged and perfected to meet any new wants of her citizens, to the end of time. Our system, too, is one and the same for both rich and poor; for, as all human beings, in regard to their natural rights, stand upon a footing of equality before God, so, in this respect, the human has been copied from the divine plan of government, by placing all citizens on the same footing of equality before the law of the land. For these purposes, therefore, we do not desire to copy or to study the systems of foreign nations, usually so different from our own,—we hope, rather, that they will study and copy ours.

And further, in regard to the general organization and maintenance of the Prussian and other German schools, we already have extensive means of knowledge. The Report of M. Cousin, formerly Minister of Public Instruction in France, upon the Prussian system; the Report of Dr. Bache, late President of Girard College, in regard to all kinds of charitable foundations for instruction in Europe; the admirable Report of Professor Stowe, made to the General Assembly of Ohio in 1837; together with various articles to be found in reviews and other periodicals published within the last twenty years, will supply the general reader with all that he will care to know on these topics. My purpose, therefore, is to confine myself to those points respecting which we have not as yet adequate means of information; and to refer to what has been sufficiently detailed by other inquirers, only when necessary for the sake of giving unity and intelligibleness to my own remarks.

I ought to premise that I have visited but a small number of the thirty-eight German States, and seen comparatively but a few of the schools in that great Confederation. My tour was made through Prussia, Saxony, the Grand Duchy of Nassau, of Hesse Darmstadt, Baden, and a few of the smaller States, together with Hamburg and Frankfort, the largest of the free cities belonging to the Confederation. This cautionary statement is necessary, because travellers are apt to generalize their facts, making particular instances represent whole countries; and perhaps readers are quite as prone to this generalization as writers. Prussia contains a population of 14 or 15,000,000; Saxony about 2,000,000; and in the schools of these and other German States I spent from six weeks to two months, using all practicable diligence in going from place to place, visiting schools and conversing with teachers and school officers by day, and examining educational pamphlets, reports, &c., at night. But, of course, I could visit only a small part of the schools which represent a population of 18 or 20,000,000. Perhaps I saw as fair a proportion of the Prussian and Saxon schools, as one would see of the schools in Massachusetts who should visit those of Boston, Newburyport, Lexington, New Bedford, Worcester, Northampton and Springfield.

The authority and control assumed by the above-mentioned governments over the youth of the State, are very extensive. The impartial observer, however, is bound to admit, that this assumption is not wholly for the aggrandizement of the rulers;—that this authority is not claimed in the mere spirit of arbitrary power, but, to a great extent, for the welfare of the subject. A gentleman who formerly resided in one of the smaller German States, and who there exercised the office of judge,—a part of whose functions was the appointment of guardians to minors and others, (in this respect analogous to one of the duties of our Judges of Probate,) told me that it was the common custom of himself and his brethren in office, when a guardian appeared to render his annual account, to require him to produce the ward, as well as the account, for the inspection of the court; and no final account of a guardian was ever settled without a personal inspection of the ward by the judge. In these interviews not a little could be learned by the personal manners, address and appearance of the ward, as to the fidelity with which the guardian had attended to the health, habits and education of his charge.

Another fact which will strike the visiter to these countries with mingled sorrow and joy, is the number and the populousness of their orphan establishments. In the great cities, almost without exception, one or more of these is to be found. The wars of Europe have torn away the fathers from the protection of their families; and, for long periods, almost all that many thousands of children knew of the parent, who should have been their guide and counsellor until mature age, was, that he died in the camp, or added another unit to the slaughtered hosts of the battle-field. But it must be allowed that the governments have done something, however inadequate, to atone for

their enormous guilt. The orphan houses, originally established mainly for this class of bereaved children, have been, since the general pacification of Europe, appropriated to orphans of other classes. Here their living,—including board, clothes, lodging,—and excellent instruction in all the elementary branches, with drawing, music, &c., are gratuitously furnished.

In the Royal Orphan House, at Potsdam, for instance, there are a thousand boys,—all the children of soldiers. They seem collected there as a monument of the havoc which war makes of men. Connected with this, though in another place, is an establishment for the orphan daughters of soldiers. The institution for boys differs from most others of the same class which I saw, in paying great attention to physical training. As the boys are destined for the army, it is thought important to give them agility and vigor; and at the age of fourteen, the institution discards those who are not healthy. (It is not yet discovered that activity and energy are necessary in any occupation save that of killing our fellow-men.) The boys practise gymnastic exercises,—such as climbing poles, ascending ropes, flinging their bodies round and round over a bar, while they hold on only by the bend of the legs at the knee-joints, vaulting upon the wooden horse, &c. &c.,—until their physical feats reach a point of perfection which I have never seen surpassed, except by professional circus-riders or rope-dancers. It is of these pupils that Dr. Bache says, "I have never seen a body of young men all so well physically developed,—a result produced by constant attention to their education on this point." In the dormitories, however, I saw the same fearful assemblage of feather beds as elsewhere,—a hundred and forty in a room. But the rooms had the redeeming circumstance of being well ventilated.

The Franke Institute, at Halle, founded about the beginning of the last century, now numbering nearly three thousand pupils, (a small part only, at the present time, are orphans,) is considered the parent of this class of institutions, in Germany; and a more admirable establishment of the kind, or one conducted with more intelligence and utility, probably does not exist in the world.

Another class of institutions should challenge the admiration of all civilized people, and be imitated in every nation. I refer to schools established in connection with prisons. When a Prussian parent has forfeited his liberty by the commission of a crime, and is therefore sequestered from society and from his family, his children are not left to abide the scorn of the community, nor abandoned to the tender mercies of chance. The mortification of having a disgraced parent seems enough, without the life-long calamity of a neglected youth. Hence such children are taken and placed under the care of a wise and humane teacher, who supplies to them that parental guidance which it has been their affliction to lose. Indeed, such care is taken in selecting the teachers of these schools, that the transfer into their hands generally proves a blessing to the children. Thus society is saved from the depredations and the expense

of a second, perhaps of a third and a fourth generation of criminals, through these acts of foresight and prevention,—acts which are as clearly connected with sound worldly policy as with those higher moral and religious obligations, which bind the conscience of every citizen and legislator.

Prussia and Saxony have still another class of institutions of the most beneficent description ever devised by man. These are reformatory establishments for youthful offenders; or, as they are most expressively and beautifully called in the language of the country, "Redemption Institutes." The three principal establishments of this class which I visited, were, one at Hamburgh, under the care of Mr. Wichern; one just outside the Halle gate of the city of Berlin, superintended by Mr. Kopf; and one at Dresden, under Mr. Schubert. At this latter place, for the first and only time in Germany, I heard correct physiological principles advocated in theory and thoroughly carried out in practice. Here the feather bed, as a covering, was disused and condemned,—the woollen blanket being substituted for it;—and the Principal, not knowing my views upon the subject, began to defend his abandonment of the common practice, with something of the zeal of a reformer.*

Some of the facts connected with the "Redemption Institute" at Hamburgh, are so extraordinary, and illustrate so forcibly the combined power of wisdom and love, in the reformation of vicious children, that I cannot forbear detailing them.

The school of Mr. J. H. Wichern is called the "Rauhe Haus," and is situated four or five miles out of the city of Hamburgh. It was opened for the reception of abandoned children of the very lowest class,—children brought up in the abodes of infamy, and taught, not only by example but by precept, the vices of sensuality, thieving, and vagabondry,—children who had never known the family tie, or who had known it only to see it violated. Hamburgh, having been for many years a *commercial* and *free* city, and, of course, open to adventurers and renegades from all parts of the world, has many more of this class of population than its own institutions and manners would have bred. The thoughts of Mr. Wichern were strongly turned towards this subject while yet a student at the university; but want of means deterred him from engaging in it, until a legacy, left by a Mr. Gercken, enabled him to make a beginning, in 1833. He has since devoted his life and all his worldly goods to the work. It is his first aim that the abandoned children whom he seeks out on the highway, and in the haunts of vice, shall know and feel the blessings of *domestic* life;—that they shall be introduced into the bosom of a family;—for this he regards as a divine institution, and therefore the birthright of every human being, and the only atmosphere in which the human affections can be adequately cultivated. His house, then, must not be a prison, or a place of punishment or confinement. The site he had chosen for his experiment was one

* At an orphan school, near by, woollen was also used as a covering instead of feathers, but here the principal apologized for the absence of the latter, by saying the children and the institution were too poor to afford them.

enclosed within high, strong walls and fences. His first act was to break down these barriers, and to take all bolts and bars from the doors and windows. He began with three boys of the worst description; and within three months, the number increased to twelve. They were taken into the bosom of Mr. Wichern's family;—his mother was their mother, and his sister their sister. They were not punished for any past offences, but were told that all should be forgiven them, if they tried to do well in future. The defenceless condition of the premises was referred to, and they were assured that no walls or bolts were to detain them; that one cord only should bind them, and that the cord of Love. The effect attested the all but omnipotent power of generosity and affection. Children, from seven or eight to fifteen or sixteen years of age, in many of whom early and loathsome vices had nearly obliterated the stamp of humanity, were transformed not only into useful members of society, but into characters that endeared themselves to all within their sphere of acquaintance. The education given by Mr. Wichern has not been an æsthetic or literary one. The children were told at the beginning that labor was the price of living, and that they must earn their own bread, if they would secure a comfortable home. He did not point them to ease and affluence, but to an honorable poverty, which, they were taught, was not in itself an evil. Here were means and materials for learning to support themselves; but there was no rich fund or other resources for their maintenance. Charity had supplied the home to which they were invited; their own industry must supply the rest. Mr. Wichern placed great reliance upon religious training; but this did not consist in giving them dry and unintelligible dogmas. He spoke to them of Christ, as the benefactor of mankind, who proved, by deeds of love, his interest in the race,—who sought out the worst and most benighted of men, to give them instruction and relief, and who left it in charge to those who came after him, and wished to be called his disciples, to do likewise. Is it strange that, enforced by such a practical exemplification of Christian love as their fatherly benefactor gave them in his every-day life, the story of Christ's words and deeds should have sunk deeply into their hearts and melted them into tenderness and docility? Such was the effect. The most rapid improvement ensued in the great majority of the children; and even those whom long habits of idleness and vagabondry made it difficult to keep in the straight path, had long seasons of obedience and gratitude, to which any aberration from duty was only an exception.

As the number of pupils increased, Mr. Wichern saw that the size of the family would seriously impair its domestic character. To obviate this, he divided his company into families of twelve, and he has erected nine separate buildings, situated in a semi-circle around his own, and near to it, in each of which dwells a family of twelve boys or of twelve girls, under the care of a House-Father or House-Mother, as the assistants are respectively called. Each of these families is, to some extent, an independent community, having an individuality of its own.

They eat and sleep in their own dwelling, and the children belonging to each look up to their own particular father or mother, as home-bred children to a parent. The general meeting every morning,—at first in the chamber of Mr. Wichern's mother, but afterwards, when the numbers increased, in the little chapel,—and their frequent meetings at work, or in the play-ground, form a sufficient, and, in fact, a very close bond of union for the whole community. Much was done by the children themselves in the erection of their little colony of buildings;—and in doing this, they were animated by a feeling of hope and a principle of independence in providing a dwelling for themselves, while they experienced the pleasures of benevolence in rendering assistance to each other. Mr. Wichern mentions, with great satisfaction, the good spirit of the architect who came upon the premises to direct in putting up the first house. This man would not retain a journeyman for a day or an hour, who did not conduct with the utmost decorum and propriety before the children who were assisting in the work.

Instruction is given in reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, and drawing,—and in some instances, in higher branches. Music is used as one of the most efficient instruments for softening stubborn wills, and calling forth tender feelings; and its deprivation is one of the punishments for delinquency. The songs and hymns have been specially adapted to the circumstances and wants of the community, and it has often happened that the singing of an appropriate hymn, both at the gatherings in the mother's chamber, which were always more or less kept up, and in the little chapel, has awakened the first-born sacred feeling in obdurate and brutified hearts. Sometimes a voice would drop from the choir, and then weeping and sobbing would be heard instead. The children would say, they could not sing,—they must think of their past lives, of their brothers and sisters, or of their parents living in vice and misery at home. On several occasions the singing exercise had to be given up. Frequently the children were sent out to the garden to recover themselves. An affecting narrative is recorded of a boy who ran away, but whom Mr. Wichern pursued, found, and persuaded to return. He was brought back on Christmas eve, which was always celebrated in the mother's chamber. The children were engaged in singing the Christmas hymns when he entered the room. At first they manifested strong disapprobation of his conduct, for he was a boy to whose faults special forbearance had been previously shown. They were then told to decide among themselves how he should be punished. This brought them all to perfect silence, and after some whispering and consulting together, one, who had formerly been guilty of the same fault of ingratitude, under still less excusable circumstances, burst out in a petition for his forgiveness. All united in it, reached out to him a friendly hand, and the festival of the Christmas eve was turned into a rejoicing over the brother that had been lost but was found. The pardon was not in words merely, but in deeds. No reference to the fact was afterwards made. A day

or two after, he was sent away on an errand to the distance of half a mile. He was surprised and affected by this mark of confidence; and from that time never abused his freedom, though intrusted to execute commissions at great distances. But he could never after hear certain Christmas hymns without shedding tears; and long subsequently, in a confidential communication to Mr. Wichern, respecting some act of his former life, (an unburdening of the overladen conscience, which was very common with the inmates, and always voluntary; for they were told on their arrival, that their past life should never be spoken of unless between them and himself,) he referred to the decisive effect of that scene of loving-kindness, upon his feelings and character.

One peculiar feature of this institution is, that the children are not stimulated by the worldly motives of fame, wealth, or personal aggrandizement. The superintendent does not inflame them with the ambition, that if they surpass each other at recitation, and make splendid displays at public examinations, they shall, in the end, become high military officers, or congress-men, or excite the envy of all by their wealth or fame. On the other hand, so far as this world's goods are concerned, he commends and habituates them to the idea of an honorable poverty; and the only riches with which he dazzles their imaginations are the riches of good works. He looks to them as his hope for redeeming others from the sphere whence they themselves were taken; and there have been many touching instances of the reformation of parents and families, for whom the natural affection first sprang up in these children's hearts, after they had learned the blessings of home and what the ties of nature really are.

One of the most interesting effects of this charity is the charity which it reproduces in its objects; and thus it is shown that, in the order of nature, the actions of good men,—provided they are also wise,—not less than good seed, will produce thirty, or sixty, or a hundred fold of beneficent fruit. Mr. Wichern makes a great point of celebrating Christmas, and the friends of the school are in the habit of sending small sums of money, and articles of various kinds to adorn the festival. This money has often been voluntarily appropriated by the children, to charitable purposes. They frequently give away their pennies, and instances have happened where they have literally emptied their little purses into the hands of poverty and distress, and taken off their own clothes to cover the naked. On one occasion, six poor children had been found by some of the scholars, and invited to the Christmas festival. There they were clothed, and many useful and pleasing articles, made by the givers, were presented to them. One of the boys read a passage from the history of Christ, and the Christmas songs and other songs of thanksgiving and praise were sung. To the sound of the organ, which a friend had presented to the little chapel, some verses welcoming the strangers, succeeded. The guests then departed, blessing the house and its kind inhabitants; but who can doubt that a voice of gladness, more pre-

cious than all worldly applauses, sprang up unbidden and exulting in the hearts of the little benefactors?

But among numerous less conspicuous instances of the change wrought by wise and appropriate moral means, in the character of these so lately abandoned children, the most remarkable occurred at the time of the great Hamburgh fire, in May, 1842. In July, 1843, I saw the vast chasm which the conflagration had made in the centre of that great city. The second day of the fire, when people were driven from the city in crowds, and houseless and half frantic sufferers came to the Rauhe House for shelter, the children,—some of whom had friends and relatives in the city,—became intensely excited, and besought Mr. Wichern for leave to go in and make themselves useful to the sufferers. Not without great anxiety as to the force of the temptations for escape or for plunder, that might assail them in such an exposed and tumultuous scene, he gave permission to a band of twenty-two to accompany him, on condition that they would keep together as much as possible, and return with him at an appointed time. This they readily promised; nor did they disappoint him. Their conduct was physically as well as morally heroic. They rushed into the greatest dangers to save life and property, and though sometimes pressed to receive rewards, they steadily refused them. At stated intervals they returned to the appointed place to reassure the confidence of their superior. On one occasion, a lad remained absent long beyond the time agreed upon, but at last he appeared, quite exhausted by the labor of saving some valuable property. Mr. Wichern afterwards learned from the owner,—not from the lad,—that he had steadily refused the compensation offered to, and even urged upon him. When the company returned home at the appointed time, he sent forth another band under the care of a House-Father, and these exerted themselves in the same faithful and efficient manner. This was done as long as the necessity of the case required. From this time the Rauhe House was the resort of the poor and homeless,—and not for days only, but for weeks. The pupils shared with them their food, and even slept upon the ground to give their beds to the destitute, sick and injured. I can hardly refrain from narrating many other facts of a similar character connected with this institution; for if the angels rejoice over a rescued sinner, why should not we partake of that joy when it is our brother who is ransomed?

In his last report, Mr. Wichern says the institution was actually so impoverished by the demand made upon it at that time, and the demands upon public charity have since been so great in that unfortunate city, that the inmates have been almost reduced to suffering for the necessities of life,—particularly as he was induced to receive several children rendered homeless by that calamity. To this object, however, even the children of the house were ready and willing to contribute portions of their wardrobe, and they submitted cheerfully to other privations. Mr. Wichern regretted above all other things the necessity of refusing many applications,—and it is but doing

justice to the citizens of Hamburg, to state, that on an appeal made by him for funds to erect a new building, they were generously and promptly raised by those who had such unusual claims upon their charity.

A single remark, I must be allowed to make. When an individual effects so much good, it seems to be often thought that he accomplishes it by virtue of some charm or magic, or preternatural influence, of which the rest of the world cannot partake. The superintendent of the Rauhe House is a refutation of this idea. Laboriously, perseveringly, unintermittingly, he uses MEANS for the accomplishment of his desired ends. When I put to him the question, in what manner he produced these transforming effects upon his charge, his answer was, "By active occupations, music, and Christian love." Two or three things should be stated in explanation of this compendious reply. When a new subject comes to the Rauhe House, he is first received into Mr. Wichern's own family. Here, under the wise and watchful guardianship of the master, he is initiated into the new life of action, thought, feeling, which he is expected to lead. His dispositions are watched, his character is studied; and as soon as prudence allows, he is transferred to that one of the little colonies whose House-Father is best qualified to manage his peculiarities of temperament and disposition. Soon after the opening of the establishment, and the increase of its numbers, Mr. Wichern found that it would be impossible for him to bestow the requisite care and oversight upon each one of his pupils which his necessities demanded. He cast about for assistance, and though he was able to find those in the community who had enough of the spirit of benevolence and self-sacrifice to undertake the difficult labor to which his own life was devoted, yet he soon found that they had not the other requisite qualifications to make their benevolent purposes available. He could find enough well-intentioned persons to superintend the work-shops, gardens, &c., but they had not intellectual competency. So he could find schoolmasters who could give good lessons, but they were not masters of any handicraft. He was therefore driven, as he says, to the expedient of preparing a class of teachers, to become his auxiliaries in the work. For this end, he has superadded to his original plan a school for the preparation of teachers;—first to supply himself, then to send abroad to open other institutions similar to his own, and thirdly to become superintendents of prisons. This last object he deems very important. Questions about prison-architecture, he says, have given a new literature to the world; but as yet, nothing, or but little, is done to improve the character or increase the qualifications of prison-keepers. I have often felt the force of this remark, in the numerous continental prisons which I have visited. Though the masters of the prisons have generally appeared to be very respectable men, yet the assistants or deputy-turnkeys have very often seemed to belong to a low order of society, from whose manners, conversation, or treatment of the prisoners, no good influence could be expected.

This second institution of Mr. Wichern is in reality a Normal school, which the necessities of his situation suggested, and forced him to establish.

During the ten years of the existence of this institution, there have been one hundred and thirty-two children received into it. Of these about eighty were there on the 1st of July, 1843. Only two had run away, who had not either voluntarily returned, or, being brought back, had not voluntarily remained. The two unreclaimed fugitives committed offences, fell into the hands of the civil magistrate, and were imprisoned.

Who can reflect upon this history, where we see a self-sacrificing man, by the aids of wisdom and Christian love, exorcising, as it were, the evil spirits from more than a hundred of the worst children whom a corrupted state of society has engendered;—who can see this, without being reminded of some case, perhaps within his own personal knowledge, where a passionate, ignorant and perverse teacher, who, for the sake of saving a few dollars of money, or from some other low motive, has been put in possession of an equal number of fine-spirited children, and has, even in a shorter space of time, put an evil spirit into the bosom of them all? When visiting this institution I was reminded of an answer given to me by the Headmaster of a school of a thousand children, in London. I inquired of him, what moral education or training he gave to his scholars,—what he did, for instance, when he detected a child in a lie? His answer was literally this:—"I consider," said he, "all moral education to be a humbug. Nature teaches children to lie. If one of my boys lies, I set him to write some such copy as this,—'Lying is a base and infamous offence;—I make him write a quire of paper over with this copy; and he knows very well that if he does not bring it to me in a good condition, he will get a flogging.'" On hearing this reply, I felt as if the number of things, in the condition of London society, which needed explanation, was considerably reduced!

What is most remarkable in reference to the class of institutions now under consideration, is the high character of the men,—for capacity, for attainments, for social rank,—who preside over them. At the head of a private Orphan House in Potsdam, is the venerable Von Türk. According to the laws of his country, Von Türk is a nobleman. His talents and acquisitions were such that at a very early age he was elevated to the bench. This was, probably, an office for life, and was attended with honors and emoluments. He officiated as judge for fourteen years; but in the course of this time, so many criminal cases were brought before him for adjudication, whose only cause and origin were so plainly referable to early neglect in the culprit's education, that the noble heart of the judge could no longer bear to pronounce sentence of condemnation against the prisoners; for he looked upon them as men, who, almost without a paradox, might be called *guiltless offenders*. While holding the office of judge he was appointed school inspector. The paramount importance of the latter office grew upon his mind as he executed its duties, until, at last, he came to the full conception of the grand and sacred truth,—how

much more intrinsically honorable is the vocation of the teacher, who saves from crime and from wrong, than the magistrate who waits till they are committed, and then avenges them. He immediately resigned his office of judge, with its life-tenure and its salary; travelled to Switzerland, where he placed himself under the care of Pestalozzi; and, after availing himself for three years of the instructions of that celebrated teacher, he returned to take charge of an orphan asylum. Since that time he has devoted his whole life to the care of the neglected and destitute. He lives in as plain and inexpensive a style as our well-off farmers and mechanics, and devotes his income to the welfare of the needy. I was told by his personal friends that he not only deprived himself of the luxuries of life, but submitted to many privations in order to appropriate his small income to others whom he considered more needy;—and that his wife and family cordially and cheerfully shared such privations with him for the same object. To what extent would our own community sympathize with, or appreciate the act, if one of the judges of our higher courts, or any other official dignitary, should resign an office of honor and of profit to become the instructor of children!

Even now, when the once active and vigorous frame of this patriarchal man is bending beneath the weight of years, he employs himself in teaching agriculture, together with the branches commonly taught in the Prussian schools, to a class of orphan boys. What warrior, who rests at last from the labors of the tented field, after a life of victories; what statesman, whose name is familiar in all the courts of the civilized world; what orator, who attracts towards himself tides of men wherever he may move in his splendid course;—what one of all these would not, at the sunset of life, exchange his fame and his clustering honors, for that precious and abounding treasury of holy and beneficent deeds, the remembrance of which this good old man is about to carry into another world! Do we not need a new spirit in our community, and especially in our schools, which shall display only objects of virtuous ambition before the eyes of our emulous youth; and teach them that no height of official station, nor splendor of professional renown, can equal in the eye of Heaven, and of all good men, the true glory of a life consecrated to the welfare of mankind?

CLASSIFICATION.

The first element of superiority in a Prussian school, and one whose influence extends throughout the whole subsequent course of instruction, consists in the proper classification of the scholars. In all places where the numbers are sufficiently large to allow it, the children are divided according to ages and attainments; and a single teacher has the charge only of a single class, or of as small a number of classes as is practicable. I have before adverted to the construction of the school-houses, by which, as far as possible, a room is assigned to each class. Let us suppose a teacher to have the charge of but one

class, and to have talent and resources sufficient properly to engage and occupy its attention, and we suppose a perfect school. But how greatly are the teacher's duties increased, and his difficulties multiplied, if he have four, five, or half a dozen classes, under his personal inspection. While attending to the recitation of one, his mind is constantly called off, to attend to the studies and the conduct of all the others. For this, very few teachers amongst us have the requisite capacity; and hence the idleness and the disorder that reign in so many of our schools,—excepting in cases where the debasing motive of fear puts the children in irons. All these difficulties are at once avoided by a suitable classification,—by such a classification as enables the teacher to address his instructions at the same time to all the children who are before him, and to accompany them to the playground, at recess or intermission, without leaving any behind who might be disposed to take advantage of his absence. All this will become more and more obvious as I proceed with a description of exercises. There is no obstacle whatever, save prescription, and that *vis inertia* of mind which continues in the beaten track because it has not vigor enough to turn aside from it,—to the introduction, at once, of this mode of dividing and classifying scholars, in all our large towns.

METHOD OF TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN ON THEIR FIRST ENTERING SCHOOL.

In regard to this as well as other modes of teaching, I shall endeavor to describe some particular lessons that I heard. The Prussian and Saxon schools are all conducted substantially upon the same plan, and taught in the same manner. Of course, there must be those differences to which different degrees of talent and experience give rise.

In Professor Stowe's excellent report he says, "Before the child is even permitted to learn his letters, he is under conversational instruction, frequently, for six months or a year; and then a single week is sufficient to introduce him into intelligent and accurate plain reading." I confess that in the numerous schools I visited, I did not find this preparatory instruction carried on for any considerable length of time, before lessons in which all the children took part were commenced. Perhaps, since his visit, the practice has been changed.

About twenty years ago, teachers in Prussia made the important discovery that children have five senses,—together with various muscles and mental faculties,—all which, almost by a necessity of their nature, must be kept in a state of activity, and which, if not usefully, are liable to be mischievously employed. Subsequent improvements in the art of teaching have consisted in supplying interesting and useful, instead of mischievous occupation, for these senses, muscles and faculties. Experience has now proved that it is much easier to furnish profitable and delightful employment for all these powers, than it is to stand over them with a rod and stifle their workings, or to assume a thousand shapes of fear to guard the thousand avenues through which the salient spirits of the young play

outward. Nay it is much easier to keep the eye and hand and mind at work together, than it is to employ any one of them separately from the others. A child is bound to the teacher by so many more cords, the more of his natural capacities the teacher can interest and employ.

In the case I am now to describe, I entered a classroom of sixty children, of about six years of age. The children were just taking their seats, all smiles and expectation. They had been at school but a few weeks, but long enough to have contracted a love for it. The teacher took his station before them, and after making a playful remark which excited a light titter around the room, and effectually arrested attention, he gave a signal for silence. After waiting a moment, during which every countenance was composed and every noise hushed, he made a prayer consisting of a single sentence, asking that as they had come together to learn, they might be good and diligent. He then spoke to them of the beautiful day, asked what they knew about the seasons, referred to the different kinds of fruit-trees then in bearing, and questioned them upon the uses of trees in constructing houses, furniture, &c. Frequently he threw in sportive remarks which enlivened the whole school, but without ever producing the slightest symptom of disorder. During this familiar conversation, which lasted about twenty minutes, there was nothing frivolous or trifling in the manner of the teacher; that manner was dignified though playful, and the little jets of laughter which he caused the children occasionally to throw out, were much more favorable to a receptive state of mind than jets of tears.

Here I must make a preliminary remark, in regard to the equipments of the scholars and the furniture of the schoolroom. Every child had a slate and pencil, and a little reading book of letters, words, and short sentences. Indeed, I never saw a Prussian or Saxon school,—above an infant school,—in which any child was unprovided with a slate and pencil. By the teacher's desk, and in front of the school, hung a blackboard. The teacher first drew a house upon the blackboard; and here the value of the art of drawing,—a power universally possessed by Prussian teachers,—became manifest. By the side of the drawing and under it, he wrote the word *house* in the German script hand, and printed it in the German letter. With a long pointing rod,—the end being painted white to make it more visible,—he ran over the form of the letters,—the children, with their slates before them and their pencils in their hands, looking at the pointing rod and tracing the forms of the letters in the air. In all our good schools, children are first taught to imitate the forms of letters on the slate before they write them on paper; here they were first imitated on the air, then on slates, and subsequently, in older classes, on paper. The next process was to copy the word "house," both in script and in print, on their slates. Then followed the formation of the sounds of the letters of which the word was composed, and the spelling of the word. Here the *names* of the letters were not given as with us, but only their powers, or the sounds which those letters

have in combination. The letter *h* was first selected and set up in the reading-frame, (the same before described as part of the apparatus of Prussian schools for young children,) and the children, instead of articulating our alphabetic *h*, (aitch,) merely gave a hard breathing,—such a sound as the letter really has in the word “house.” Then the diphthong, *au*, (the German word for “house” is spelled “haus,”) was taken and sounded by itself, in the same way. Then the blocks containing *h*, and *au*, were brought together, and the two sounds were combined. Lastly, the letter *s* was first sounded by itself, then added to the others, and then the whole word was spoken. Sometimes the last letter in a word was first taken and sounded,—after that the penultimate,—and so on until the word was completed. The responses of the children were sometimes individual, and sometimes simultaneous, according to a signal given by the master.

In every such school, also, there are printed sheets or cards, containing the letters, diphthongs and whole words. The children are taught to sound a diphthong, and then asked in what words that sound occurs. On some of these cards there are words enough to make several short sentences, and when the pupils are a little advanced, the teacher points to several isolated words in succession, which when taken together make a familiar sentence, and thus he gives them an agreeable surprise, and a pleasant initiation into reading.

After the word “house” was thus completely impressed upon the minds of the children, the teacher drew his pointing rod over the lines which formed the house; and the children imitated him, first in the air, while they were looking at his motions, then on their slates. In their drawings there was of course a great variety as to taste and accuracy; but each seemed pleased with his own, for their first attempts had never been so criticised as to produce discouragement. Several children were then called to the blackboard to draw a house with chalk. After this, the teacher entered into a conversation about houses. The first question was, what kind of a house was that on the blackboard. Then the names of other kinds of houses were given. The materials of which houses are built were mentioned,—stone, brick, wood; the different kinds of wood; nails, and where they were made; lime, and whence it came, &c. &c. When the teacher touched upon points with which the children were supposed to be acquainted, he asked questions; when he passed to subjects beyond their sphere, he gave information, intermingling the whole with lively remarks and pleasant anecdotes.

And here one important particular should not be omitted. In this, as well as in all other schools, a complete answer was always required. For instance, if a teacher asks, “What are houses made of?” he does not accept the answer, “of wood” or “of stone;” but he requires a full, complete, (vollständig) answer;—as, “a house may be made of wood.” The answer must always contain an intelligible proposition without reference to the words of the question to complete it. And here also

the greatest care is taken that the answer shall always be grammatically correct, have the right terminations of all articles, adjectives and nouns, and the right grammatical transpositions according to the idioms and structure of the language. This secures from the beginning, precision in the expression of ideas; and if, as many philosophers suppose, the intellect could never carry forward its processes of argument or investigation to any great extent, without using language as its instrument, then these children, in their primary lessons, are not only led to exercise the intellect, but the instrument is put into their hands by which its operations are facilitated.

When the hour had expired, I do not believe there was a child in the room who knew or thought that his play-time had come. No observing person can be at a loss to understand how such a teacher can arrest and retain the attention of his scholars. It must have happened to almost every one, at some time in his life, to be present as a member of a large assembly, when some speaker, in the midst of great uproar and confusion, has arisen to address it. If, in the very commencement of his exordium, he makes what is called a happy hit, which is answered by a response of laughter or applause from those who are near enough to hear it, the attention of the next circle will be aroused. If, then, the speaker makes another felicitous sally of wit or imagination, this circle too becomes the willing subject of his power; until, by a succession of flashes whether of genius or of wit, he soon brings the whole audience under his command, and sways it as the sun and moon sway the tide. This is the result of talent, of attainment, and of the successful study both of men and of things; and whoever has a sufficiency of these requisites will be able to command the attention of children, just as a powerful orator commands the attention of men. But the one no more than the other is the unbought gift of nature. They are the rewards of application and toil superadded to talent.

Now it is obvious that in the single exercise above described, there were the elements of reading, spelling, writing, grammar and drawing, interspersed with anecdotes and not a little general information; and yet there was no excessive variety, nor were any incongruous subjects forcibly brought together. There was nothing to violate the rule of "one thing at a time."

Compare the above method with that of calling up a class of abecedarians,—or, what is more common, a single child, and, while the teacher holds a book or a card before him, and, with a pointer in his hand, says, *a*, he echoes *a*; then *b*, and he echoes *b*; and so on until the vertical row of lifeless and ill-favored characters is completed, and then of remanding him to his seat, to sit still and look at vacancy. If the child is bright, the time which passes during this lesson is the only part of the day when he does not think. Not a single faculty of the mind is occupied except that of imitating sounds; and even the number of these imitations amounts only to twenty-six. A parrot or an idiot could do the same thing. And so of the organs and members of the body. They are condemned to

inactivity;—for the child who stands most like a post is most approved; nay, he is rebuked if he does not stand like a post. A head that does not turn to the right or left, an eye that lies moveless in its socket, hands hanging motionless at the side, and feet immovable as those of a statue, are the points of excellence, while the child is echoing the senseless table of a, b, c. As a general rule, six months are spent before the twenty-six letters are mastered, though the same child would learn the names of twenty-six playmates or twenty-six playthings in one or two days.

All children are pleased with the idea of a house, a hat, a top, a ball, a bird, an egg, a nest, a flower, &c.; and when their minds are led to see new relations or qualities in these objects, or when their former notions respecting them are brought out more vividly, or are more distinctly defined, their delight is even keener than that of an adult would be in obtaining a new fact in science, or in having the mist of some old doubt dispelled by a new discovery. Lessons on familiar objects, given by a competent teacher, never fail to command attention, and thus a habit of mind is induced of inestimable value in regard to all future study.

Again, the method I have described necessarily leads to conversation, and conversation with an intelligent teacher secures several important objects. It communicates information. It brightens ideas before only dimly apprehended. It addresses itself to the various faculties of the mind, so that no one of them ever tires or is cloyed. It teaches the child to use language, to frame sentences, to select words which convey his whole meaning, to avoid those which convey either more or less than he intends to express;—in fine, it teaches him to seek for thoughts upon a subject, and then to find appropriate language in which to clothe them. A child trained in this way will never commit those absurd and ludicrous mistakes into which uneducated men of some sense not unfrequently fall, viz., that of mis-matching their words and ideas,—of hanging, as it were, the garments of a giant upon the body of a pigmy, or of forcing a pigmy's dress upon the huge limbs of a giant. Appropriate diction should clothe just ideas, as a tasteful and substantial garb fits a graceful and vigorous form.

The above described exercise occupies the eye and the hand as well as the mind. The eye is employed in tracing visible differences between different forms, and the hand in copying whatever is presented, with as little difference as possible. And who ever saw a child that was not pleased with pictures, and an attempt to imitate them? Thus, the two grand objects so strenuously insisted upon by writers, in regard to the later periods of education and the maturer processes of thought, are attained, viz., the power of recognizing analogies and dissimilarities.

[To be continued.]